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## Million Veteran Program is Now Largest Genomic Database in the World

*Program Enrolls 500,000th U.S. Veteran*

WASHINGTON – The Department of Veterans Affairs' Million Veteran Program (MVP) has reached an important milestone when an Army Veteran from Montgomery, Alabama, became the 500,000th to voluntarily enroll in the research database program – making MVP the largest genomic database in the world.

Launched in 2011, and part of the White House Precision Medicine Initiative, participants donate blood from which DNA is extracted. A baseline and periodic follow-up surveys track Veterans' military experiences, health and lifestyles. Researchers believe the information contained in the database could hold the key to preventing and treating diseases.

"Our Veterans continue to demonstrate their selfless sacrifice, and the nation has yet another reason to owe them a debt of gratitude," said VA Secretary Robert A. McDonald. "Many of our Veterans have saved lives on the battlefield and because of their participation in MVP, their participation has the potential to save countless lives – now and for generations to come."

As part of the program, participating Veterans grant researchers secure access to their electronic health records and agree to be contacted about participating in future research. Samples and data used are coded to protect participants' identification and privacy.

Research using MVP data is already underway, studying a range of medical issues like mental illness and heart and kidney diseases. The program also has rich data on various health conditions that are common in Veterans. Approximately 62 percent of MVP enrollees report a current or past diagnosis of high blood pressure and about a third report tinnitus. Also, nearly a third or 32 percent of Veterans present with a history or current diagnosis of cancer.

"We believe MVP will accelerate our understanding of disease detection, progression, prevention and treatment by combining this rich clinical, environmental and genomic data," said Dr. David J. Shulkin, VA Under Secretary for Health. "VA has a deep history of innovation and research. MVP will allow the nation's top researchers to perform the most cutting-edge science to treat some of the nation's most troubling diseases."

For more information about MVP, including how to participate, visit www.research.va.gov/MVP/. For information about the 52 VA sites currently enrolled in the program, visit www.research.va.gov/MVP/all-clinics.cfm.

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